BRITISH COLUMBIA
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BCStats

Infoline

Contact: bcstats.infoline@gov.bc.ca | Issue: 09-15 | April 17, 2009

- **Consumer prices increase 1.1% in March**
- **Manufacturing shipments fall 2.5% in February**
- **New motor vehicle sales plunge 11.6% in February**

Prices

- **British Columbia's year-over-year inflation rate sat at 1.1% in March, down from a 1.5% rate posted in February.** Most of the increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) came as a result of the continuing trend toward higher food prices (+7.7%), the effect of which was mitigated by a fifth consecutive decrease in the cost of energy products (-9.6%). Excluding energy from the CPI, inflation in BC was 2.0%.

  The rise in the cost of food purchased at restaurants and grocery stores (+7.7%) was the largest twelve-month increase recorded since June 1991 and came hot on the heels of 7.0% price jumps recorded in both January and February. Fresh fruits (+20.0%) and vegetables (+18.4%) continued to take a larger slice out of household budgets. Overall, groceries cost 9.9% more than a year ago.

  Inflation surrounding shelter costs in BC was relatively low (+0.3%). While rental costs rose (+1.8%), the price of owned accommodation actually fell (-0.6%). Clothing prices were also on the slide, dropping 1.1% from where they were a year ago. However, the price of health & personal care (+2.6%), along with the cost of operating and furnishing a home (+2.3%), was up moderately.

  Despite a hike in insurance premiums (+3.7%) and increased maintenance costs (+3.1%), operating an automobile was relatively cheaper (-5.8%) because of lower gas prices (-16.8%). This, coupled with a further drop in the price of purchasing or leasing an automobile (-5.9%), pushed total transportation costs lower (-4.4%). Prices for recreation, education & reading materials increased slightly (+0.9%) while alcohol & tobacco prices rose 2.3%.

  The inflation rate in Victoria was in line with the rest of BC at 1.1% while the rise in Vancouver's price level (+1.3%) was slightly above the provincial average.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Compared to the same month a year earlier, consumer prices in Canada rose 1.2% in March because of higher food (+7.9%) and shelter (2.1%) costs.** Compared to February, inflation rates were down in most provinces, while prices actually fell in PEI (-0.2%) and remained unchanged in Nova Scotia.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Economy

- **The decline in British Columbia's manufacturing sales continued for a fifth straight month as shipments were down 2.5% (*seasonally adjusted*) in February.** Weaker sales persist in the province's forest sector as shipments of paper (-7.3%) and wood (-3.3%) products continued to fall.

  After dominating the manufacturing sector for decades, shipments of wood and paper products in BC have decreased in recent times. Once accounting for nearly two-fifths (38%) of total manufacturing sales, wood products contributed far less than half of that (14%) in February. Similarly, the paper industry's share of shipments has shrunk from a high of 25% to just 12%. Food producers, however, have slowly, yet steadily increased their share of total manufacturing sales over the past decade, rising from 9% in March 2000 to double that (18%) nearly ten years

Report | Divide and Conquer BC

Did you know...
About one-fifth (21%) of fans believe that the Vancouver Canucks will go 'all the way' during the 2009 Stanley Cup.
Data Source: Ipsos Canada

later, making it the largest contributing industry in the manufacturing sector.

After posting six consecutive monthly declines, national manufacturing sales increased 2.2% in February due to a recent recovery in shipments in Ontario (+7.2%).
Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Following a modest recovery in the previous month, new motor vehicle sales in BC declined (-11.6%, *seasonally adjusted*) in February.** Flagging sales of North American-built vehicles continued to account for the lion's share of the downturn, with dealerships registering fewer sales of both domestic cars (-13.7%) and trucks (-19.1%). Nationally, new motor vehicle sales were down 2.2%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats*

- **An increase in affordability helped propel the number of homes sold in BC via the Multiple Listing Service® (MLS®) ahead by 13.6% (*seasonally adjusted*) in March.** However, at an unadjusted 5,464 units, total sales in BC were off by more than one-quarter (-25.3%) from levels recorded in March 2008, despite a 12.2% decrease in the average residential price. Nationally, MLS® sales increased 7.0% in March.
Data Source: Canadian & BC Real Estate Associations

- **Compared to the same month in the previous year, the number of bankruptcies filed in British Columbia increased 44.8% in February.** As the number of commercial bankruptcies rose just 9.1%, most of the increase was due to a jump in the number of consumers (+47.4%) filing for bankruptcy.

  Nationally, bankruptcies were up 22.1%, with Alberta (+67.4%), British Columbia (+44.8%) and Ontario (+22.3%) posting the largest increases.
Data Source: Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcies

First Quarter in Review

- **BC investment in non-residential building construction dipped 1.9% lower (*seasonally adjusted*) to $1.34 billion in current dollars in the first quarter of 2009.** The decrease was spread across all sectors, but mainly the result of a sharp drop (-13.3%) in industrial construction. Investment in institutional (-3.7%) construction projects continued to retreat while investment in commercial building remained virtually unchanged. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Health

- **More than one-third (34%) of nurses providing direct care in hospitals or long-term care facilities reported having been physically assaulted by patients in 2005.** Nearly half of male nurses (46%) reported abuse compared with roughly one-third (33%) of female nurses. Increased exposure to violent patients among male nurses and a tendency for male nurses to feel protective of their female counterparts when the need to restrain aggressive patients arises were determining factors in explaining the difference in reported rates of physical abuse between the sexes.

  Independent of gender, the odds that a nurse would report abuse by patients were significantly higher among those that primarily worked evening (40%) and night (39%) shifts than those that worked day shifts (23%).

  The clinical area of employment was also a major determinant, with the highest abuse rates found in geriatric (50%), palliative care (47%), psychiatry (44%) and critical care (44%) areas, and the lowest among those in maternity (6%), recovery (16%), oncology (17%) and paediatric (23%) departments.
Data Source: Statistics Canada

The Nation

- **In February 2009, more than four-fifths (85%) of surveyed Canadians indicated that they had some savings set aside for future spending or retirement.** This was up from 2006 when just two-thirds (67%) of Canadians had funds put away. Alberta had the highest proportion of savers at 92%, while the Atlantic region had the lowest rate of savers at just 77%. For BC residents, the rate was 84%, in line with the national average.
Data Source: HSBC Bank Canada

***Infoline** Issue: 09-15*
***April** 17, 2009*

For data originating from Statistics Canada, data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the catalogue number.

Infoline Report

Contact: Werner Gründlingh
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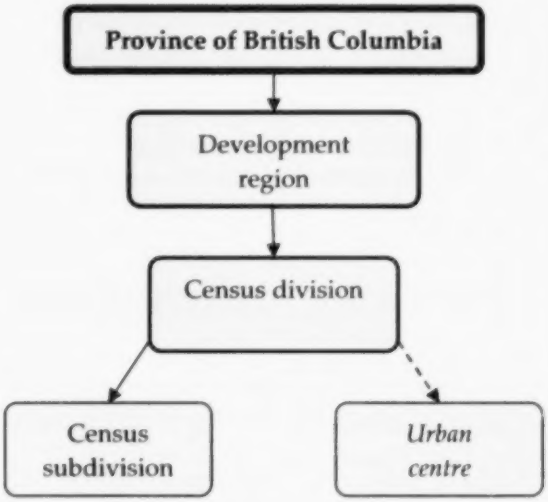
originally published in
Tourism Sector Monitor Issue 09-01

Divide and Conquer B.C.

Introduction

The *Standard Geographical Classification* (SGC) developed by Statistics Canada partitions the province of B.C. into a hierarchy of geographical areas based on population. B.C. is first divided into eight development regions, which are comprised of mutually exclusive *census divisions* (more commonly referred to as *regional districts*). These are split up further into disjoint *census subdivisions*, which include, but are not limited to, *municipalities, cities, towns, villages* and *Indian reserves*. *Urban centres* (UCs) reside on the same hierarchical level as *census subdivisions*, but are not necessarily as clearly defined.



How are urban centres defined?

Urban centres are typically defined by municipalities, based on city/town limits. A number of formal definitions of an urban centre exist:

TheFreeDictionary[1]: Also called a city; a densely populated urban [area], larger than a village or a town, whose inhabitants are engaged primarily in commerce and industry;

Wikipedia[2]: An area with an increased density of human-created structures in comparison to the areas surrounding it; and

WordNet[3]: A large and densely populated urban area; may include several independent administrative districts.

These definitions focus largely on population density, which is not necessarily an adequate indicator of tourism activity within an area. For example, if one used B.C. population by region alone to estimate tourist goings-on, then the number of tourists visiting the regional districts of *Fraser Valley* would outweigh visitors to *Northern Rockies* 42-to-1, while interest in *Comox-Strathcona* compared to *Fraser-Ft George* would be roughly equal[4]. Alternatively, tourism-related activity depends heavily on one's *geographical location* within the prov-

[1] *TheFreeDictionary—Free Online Encyclopedia*, available online from: http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/urban+center, cited January 2009.

[2] *Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia*, available online from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Urban_centre, cited January 2009.

[3] *WordNet—a lexicographic database of the English language*, available online from: http://wordnet.princeton.edu/, cited January 2009.

[4] Based on preliminary postcensal estimates for 2006 that includes recent census undercoverage and population growth:

- Comox-Strathcona: 104,348 persons
- Fraser-Ft George: 96,869 persons
- Fraser Valley: 265,965 persons
- Northern Rockies: 6,262 persons

Data Source: Statistics Canada

ince. This is expected, of course, since tourists favour some areas above others based on attractions, weather, social atmosphere and accessibility (amongst others).

To this extent, BC Stats investigates any particular urban centre based on client information and/or requirements. In some cases, small urban centres include businesses residing outside of city or municipal limits. Conversely, large urban areas with high business and tourist activity may be subdivided into smaller, more specific, geographic units. Consequently, one may define an urban centre as a region situated around a major urban core[5]. However, in layman's terms, a more common definition of an urban centre specific to the *Tourism Sector Monitor* (TSM) would be a geographical region displaying "sufficient" room revenue activity. Although the use of the term "urban centre" may be ambiguous, any further reference to these areas will be specific to the TSM.

An analysis of urban centres allows another level of detail to which accommodation establishments may interpret tourist-related activities. This is because urban centre definitions are sometimes very specific to a geographic location.

Urban centres across B.C.

With a few exceptions, most urban centres are defined by municipal boundaries. BC Stats currently reports on 30 different urban centres across the province. They are:

Vancouver Island/Coast

1 *Comox Valley* (includes Town of Comox, City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, Comox-Strathcona Electoral Areas A, B & K, and Comox and Pentledge Indian Reserves);
2 *City of Nanaimo;*
3 *City of Port Alberni;*
4 *City of Victoria;*
5 *Saanich Peninsula* (includes District of North Saanich, Town of Sidney and District Municipality of Central Saanich);
6 *Other Capital Regional District* (includes Capital Regional District, excluding *Saanich Peninsula* and *City of Victoria* UCs);

Mainland/Southwest

7 *City of Burnaby;*
8 *City of Richmond;*
9 *Downtown Vancouver* (includes forward sortation areas[6] V6B, V6C, V6E, V6G, V6Z, V7X, V7Y);
10 *City of Vancouver* (includes City of Vancouver, excluding the *Downtown Vancouver* UC);
11 *Other Greater Vancouver Regional District* (includes Greater Vancouver Regional District, excluding *City of Vancouver*, *City of Burnaby* and *City of Richmond* UCs);
12 *Resort Municipality of Whistler;*

Thompson/Okanagan

13 *Town of Golden;*
14 *City of Kamloops;*
15 *City of Kelowna;*
16 *City of Penticton;*
17 *City of Revelstoke;*
18 *City of Vernon;*

[5] The SGC defines a *census metropolitan area* (CMA) and census agglomeration (CA) in a very similar way. However, these are purely defined by criteria such as municipal boundaries, population and place of work, whereas urban centres may stretch beyond fixed political boundaries.

[6] Canada Post's forward sortation areas (or FSAs) sets specific postal code boundaries within geographical areas: http://www.canadapost.ca/business/tools/pg/fsamaps/

Kootenay

19 *City of Castlegar;*
20 *City of Cranbrook;*
21 *Fernie* (includes City of Fernie and postal codes of the form V0B1M• in East Kootenay Electoral Area A);
22 *City of Nelson;*

Cariboo

23 *City of Prince George;*
24 *City of Quesnel;*
25 *City of Williams Lake;*

North Coast

26 *City of Prince Rupert;*
27 *City of Terrace;*

Nechako

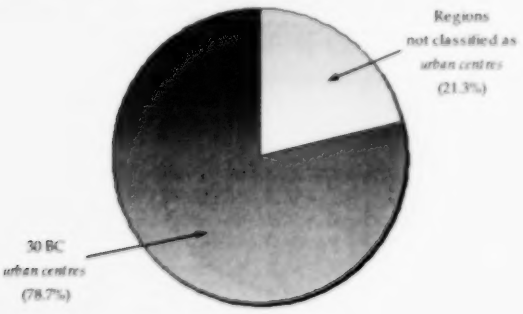
28 Town of Smithers;

Northeast

29 City of Dawson Creek; and
30 City of Fort St. John.

These urban centres constitute approximately 79% of total estimated room revenue in B.C., with the largest share held by urban centres within the Mainland/Southwest (63%), followed by Vancouver Island/Coast (15%) and Thompson/Okanagan (13%). Other regional districts each account for less than 3% of current urban centre room revenue in B.C.

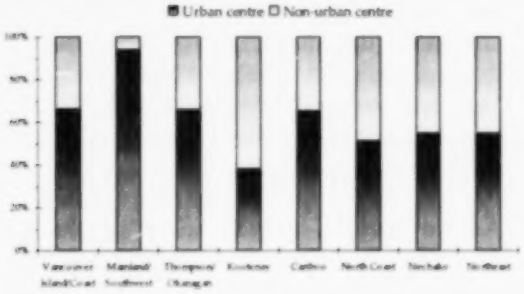
Thirty Urban Centres Make Up Almost Four Fifths of Room Revenue In B.C.



Data Source: BC Stats

Being a business hub, it is not surprising that 93% of Mainland/Southwest is classified as urban centre, based on room revenues. Similarly, Vancouver Island/Coast (67%) and Thompson/Okanagan (66%) are roughly two thirds urban.

Based On Room Revenues, 93% of Mainland/Southwest Is Categorised as Being Part of Some Urban Centre



Data Source: BC Stats

A rank of the top five urban centres, based on the average number of properties reporting hotel room tax per month for 2007, yields:

Urban centre	Properties
1 *Downtown Vancouver*	79
2 *City of Victoria*	78
3 *Other Greater Vancouver Regional District*	77
4 *Other Capital Regional District*	73
5 *Whistler*	63

However, urban centres ranked according to their contribution of 2007 room revenue in B.C., yields:

Urban centre	Room revenue (000s)
1 *Downtown Vancouver*	$ 474,987
2 *Whistler*	$ 197,173
3 *City of Victoria*	$ 147,804
4 *Richmond*	$ 126,817
5 *Other Greater Vancouver Regional District*	$ 94,806

Non-urban vs. rural

TSM urban centres are established through clientele requests only where they seem to make sense. That is, a geographical area requires some form of urban infrastructure to be designated as an urban centre. Consequently, some areas of B.C. do not fall under this umbrella, and are considered (at the moment) to be non-urban. Why not define these non-urban areas as rural? The easy answer to this question would be merely that there are still urban centres in B.C. that have not garnered any investigation by clients. Moreover, these areas may in fact have sufficient urban activity.

As the tourism-related industries change across the province over time, BC Stats will evaluate (through client requests) whether areas that are currently considered non-urban should be included as TSM urban centres. Similarly, existing urban centres are re-evaluated regularly (due to potential changes in geographical classifications across B.C.)

Growth rates between urban and non-urban centres shed some light on regions in B.C. that might warrant further analysis into additional urban centres (see the Appendix for time series comparisons between urban and non-urban centres for each regional district). BC Stats addresses each subsequent urban centre request based on ad hoc industry requirements. Additionally, confidentiality agreements with regards to revenue disclosure are also taken into consideration when deciding on the inclusion of an urban centre definition.

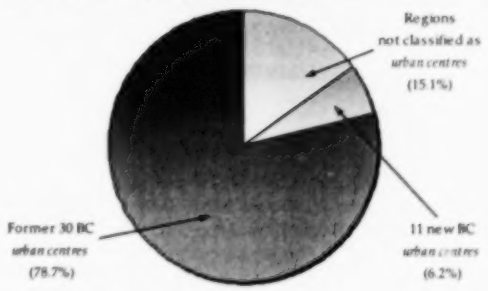
Additional urban centres

There has been interest in adding the following urban centres to the monthly tourism sector monitor (TSM) investigation:

31 *Campbell River* (includes City of Campbell River, and Campbell River and Quinsam Indian Reserves);
32 *District Municipality of Tofino;*
33 *District Municipality of Ucluelet;*
34 *Abbotsford/Mission* (includes City of Abbotsford and District Municipality of Mission);
35 *District Municipality of Hope;*
36 *Village of Cache Creek;*
37 *Town of Osoyoos;*
38 *Oliver/Okanagan Falls* (includes Town of Oliver, Community of Okanagan Falls, and Okanagan-Similkameen Electoral Areas C & D);
39 *Columbia Valley* (includes District Municipality of Invermere, Villages of Radium Hot Springs and Canal Flats, and East Kootenay Electoral Areas F & G);
40 *Kimberley* (includes City of Kimberley and Kimberley Alpine Resort); and
41 *Valemount/Robson Valley* (includes Villages of Valemount and FSAs V0E in Fraser-Ft George Electoral Area H).

These additional urban centres would cover roughly 6% more of the province in terms of room revenue, bringing the total up to 84%.

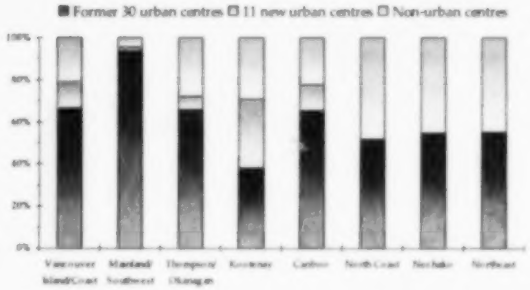
Adding 11 New Urban Centres Would Cover 84% of B.C. Room Revenue



Data Source: BC Stats

The largest boost in urban centre investigation will be experienced by Kootenay (almost doubling to 71%). No new urban centres are currently considered for North Coast, Nechako or Northeast.

Adding 11 New Urban Centres Would Cover 84% of B.C. Room Revenue



Data Source: BC Stats

Conclusion

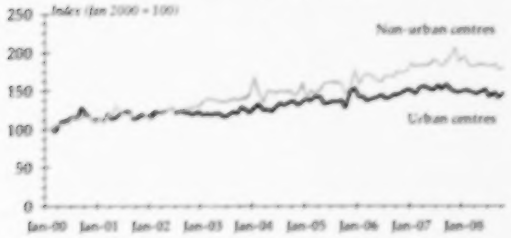
Urban centres add an additional dimension to the investigation of room revenue activity across B.C. The main benefit, of course, is the possibility to focus on a more specific geographical location and its change over time.

Collaboration between BC Stats and the public/private sector is essential when considering the incorporation of new TSM urban centres.

Appendix

The following is a BC Stats summary of [non-] urban centre room revenue growth for each regional district within BC since January 2000.

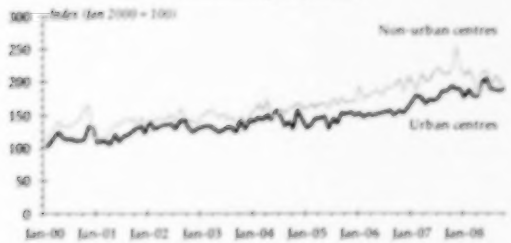
Vancouver Island/Coast room revenues
(seasonally adjusted)



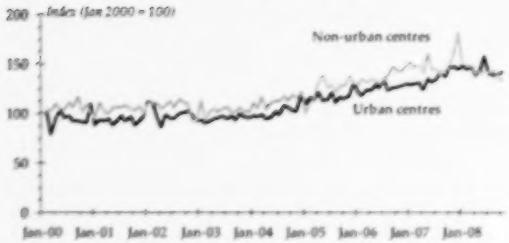
Mainland/Southwest room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)

Thompson/Okanagan room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)

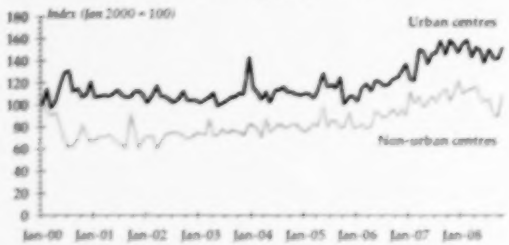
Kootenay room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)



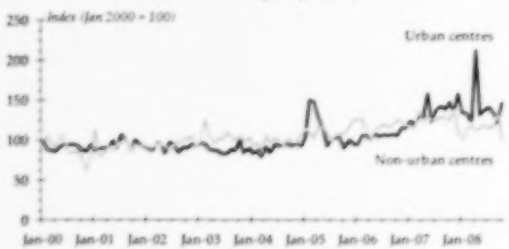
Cariboo room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)



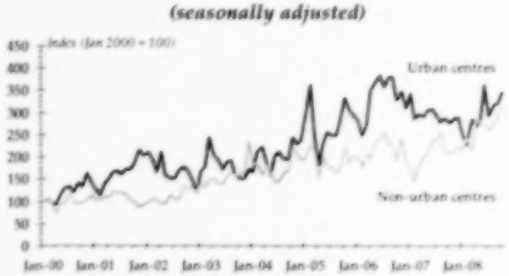
North Coast room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)



Nechako room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)



Northeast room revenue
(seasonally adjusted)



Infoline

April 17, 2009
Issue 09–15

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also on the Internet at www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca or choose RSS

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/09	% change on one year ago
BC	4,420.0	1.7
Canada	33,504.7	1.2
GDP and INCOME (Revised Nov 6)		
(BC - at market prices)	2007	% change on one year ago
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) *($ millions)*	192,528	5.4
GDP *($ 2002 millions)*	164,583	3.0
GDP *($ 2002 per Capita) (reflects revised pop)*	38,184	1.4
Personal Disposable Income *($ 2002 per Capita)*	25,282	3.1
TRADE ($ millions, seasonally adjusted)		% change on prev. month
Manufacturing Shipments - Feb	2,803	-2.5
Merchandise Exports - Feb	2,483	7.1
Retail Sales - Jan	4,387	3.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	% change on	12-month avg
(all items - Feb 2009)	one year ago	% change
BC	1.5	2.2
Vancouver	1.6	2.4
Victoria	1.5	2.0
Canada	1.4	2.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Mar '09	prev. month
Labour Force - BC	2,420	-0.2
Employed - BC	2,240	-1.0
Unemployed - BC	180	11.4
		Feb '09
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	7.4	6.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	8.0	7.7
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Apr 15/09	Apr 16/08
Prime Business Rate	2.50	5.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	4.20	9.95
- 5 year	5.45	6.99
US-CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Apr 15/09	Apr 16/08
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $ per US $	1.2038	1.0025
(closing rate) US $ per Cdn $	0.8311	0.9986
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Mar '09	one year ago
BC	790.02	3.8
Canada	796.01	3.7

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bankofcanada.ca

Demographic Atlas, Selected Indicators

The Demographic Atlas is a new mapping tool added to the BC Stats website. The 2008 population components by Local Health Areas (89 regions) can be visualized with this user-friendly, interactive, and powerful analytical application. It allows for comparison and correlation of two data sets, giving the user the ability to export the output to a document or slide show, yielding geographical analysis without the cost of expensive software or GIS knowledge.

We would like to thank the University of Victoria for their partnership, and welcome comments and enquiries.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/Atlas.asp

Local Area Economic Dependencies

Based on Census and other economic data, this report was prepared to provide consistent information on the local economies in the rural areas of the province of British Columbia and to help in the estimation of the economic impacts of changes in those local economies.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/econ_dep.asp

Dynamic Population Pyramid

One of the best tools for examining population age/sex structure and dynamics is the Population Pyramid. With this graph, one can view a region's age and sex structure with a glance, but with our dynamic pyramid tool the user can see the changing community population profile over time.

www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/pop/PeopleDataViewer/pyramid.asp

Released this week by BC Stats

- Labour Force Statistics, March 2009
- Exports, February 2009
- Consumer Price Index, March 2009
- Environmental Statistics, 2009-1

Next week

- [no releases scheduled]

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